

The Times-Dispatch

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 1910.

KEEP THE EXAMINERS.

The General Assembly is asked by Delegate Martin Williams to instruct the Committee on Schools and Colleges to secure information designed to show whether or not the State Board of Examiners should be abolished. If the Assembly adopts the Williams resolution, we are confident that its committee will discover nothing which is not wholly to the credit of the board of examiners, and which does not clearly prove that the board should by no means be abolished.

All the information in possession of The Times-Dispatch shows that the examiners have done and are doing a work of the first importance for Virginia education. Apparently Judge Williams's argument is that the appointment of new and able division superintendents at higher salaries has removed any need for the examiners. But the duties of the superintendents and the duties of the examiners are not identical. On the contrary, they are as distinct and different as possible. The superintendent is a local officer; the examiner is a State officer. The superintendent supervises the schools in his division, on the basis of existent methods; the examiner is constantly working to improve the methods in all the schools of all the divisions. The examiner is the link between a progressive central department and its resident lieutenants in the districts. Either we must hold that the educational system of Virginia can afford to stop growing now, or it must be plain that no possible improvement in the character of the superintendents could make the examiners superfluous.

The examiners are the traveling agents, the field officers, the inspectors and builders of the Department of Public Instruction. Somebody has called their board an "educational clearing-house" for the State, and the term fits. Moving constantly from place to place, they acquire a broader view of educational conditions and educational needs in the whole State than any resident officer could possibly acquire. To one community they bring the new idea which another community has tried with success, or a warning against the experiment which another community has found a failure; and to all communities they bring the plans worked out by the department and help the superintendents put them into effect. Thus they aid in raising the whole system to a common standard which grows constantly higher. Their duties are multifarious and all of a practical and helpful sort. Their system of examination and certification has given the State a higher grade of teachers. Their county and district institutes have stimulated the teachers' interest in their work and improved the instruction in the schools. Their incidental labors in many directions—addressing meetings, dedicating school-houses with public ceremonies, writing for the press, conducting a voluminous correspondence and the like—have in the same way created and kept alive popular interest in the schools. Thus the examiners—or inspectors, as they really are—have been the means of raising large sums of money from private sources for the public schools. It is said that their efforts last year brought in to the State no less than \$200,000. Yet the total cost of the board to the taxpayers is only some \$15,000 per annum.

Unless our information about the work of this board is incorrect or lamentably incomplete, we should regard its abolition as a very heavy blow to the educational progress of the State. We can conceive of no possible argument for such a step except the saving of a sum so small in comparison with the results it brings as to turn the supposed economy into a wanton and reckless extravagance.

THE OLD VIRGINIA COLONELS.

The Virginia colonels must be recently handled. They are an institution. Daring legislators, reckless of precedent, may change the arrangements of the Auditor's office, may oust a factious official, may reduce appropriations and not increase special taxes, may, in a word, do anything reckless or revolutionary, but they must not reflect upon the colonels or scorn at their ancient dignities.

IS THE GOVERNMENT FOR OR AGAINST THE MEAT TRUST?

Probably the case of American meat presents more absurdities to the square inch just now than could be found in any other field of activity on the face of the globe.

On the one hand, millions of Americans are rebelling against the exorbitant price of meat, which they believe to be held up by the manipulations of a trust. At the same time, and on exactly the same line, the American government is about to proceed against the meat packers in the courts, expecting to prove that they are banding together in an unlawful conspiracy to restrain of trade.

On the other hand, the American government, which is the American people, is about to embark on a bitter trade war with Germany, which trade war has no other object than to provide a better market for American meat in that country. Let us note some of the ridiculous contradictions which this involves.

We congratulate Richmond that she is to number Major John Hemphill among her very best. We believe he knows just what Richmond desires from out the abundance of good things he has to offer, and we suspect it will be only a day or so until our Virginia neighbor will look upon its Charleston importation as an institution of long standing and indispensable to its happiness.—Washington Herald.

Bassett French, of revered memory, dashing about in uniform on the orders of Honest John Letcher. So was it a dread thing to watch the Governor's aides shivering in the storm when the corner-stone for the Washington Monument was laid and a stirring spectacle to witness them gather around Henry A. Wise as he welcomed the Seventh New York with sixty gallons of punch when that distinguished command came to Richmond, bringing the ashes of James Monroe.

The colonels were useful in a half-dozen ways. Of the best blood of old Virginia, they were indispensable helpers at social functions. When young ladies gathered at the mansion, the aides were the most prodigal of entertainers and the most adroit of courtiers. They could flatter a maid; they could dance a measure; they fairly swamped the place when Governor Wise's fair kinswomen visited him. And in more serious matters, they were always at hand. Who ever heard of a duel in polite circles, but that a Governor's aide was present either as principal or as second? Who knew so well as the colonels the range at ten paces, or how to maintain an impasive silence when the coroner's jury was sitting? When at length war came, how quick they were to take the field, how proud of their position and how industrious! The Examiner might abuse Letcher's colonels, but they did their duty, in office and in field.

Nor were they less valuable when a political campaign was afoot. Then they would rally to their chief and champion him on the stump with vehement eloquence and heartfelt invective for his adversary. If the Governor wanted an editorial in the Enquirer, who could so safely climb the rickety office steps as an aide? Who could so deftly soothe the editor's ire and satisfy his objections? Who could manipulate a convention or secure a nomination with such consummate grace and ease?

Do away with the colonels? Transform them into a veritable militia company, drawn from the entire State? As soon fear the Bill of Rights from the Constitution, or sell Houston's Washington to a pork-baron from Chicago.

THE COMPULSORY PRIMARY IN MARYLAND.

In view of the fact that a compulsory primary has been stoutly opposed in this State as an un-Democratic, substantive of the alleged rights of parties and the like, it may be interesting to note the contrary and contradictory opinion of a Democrat of some note and distinction. We speak of Austin L. Crothers, Governor of the neighboring State of Maryland.

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sauding a foreign country to buy its products.

The American government is at one and the same time endeavoring to improve the business of an association of concerns, and to prove that that association of concerns is unfit to exist. It is at one and the same time insisting that a trust must be dissolved, and that if its products do not receive preferential treatment abroad, every American buyer of German goods and every other seller of goods to Germany must suffer for it.

The American people, unofficially, are crying out against the export of meat, and the American people, officially, are insisting upon the freest possible export of meat. The American government complains of the trust's artificially high prices, but "high" is the very thing that would most tend to beat down those prices—keeping all the meat at home.

Is the American government for or against the trust? Who will read us a clear meaning from this crazy-quilt of contraries, this mad hodge-podge of maximums and prosecutions? Shall we yet see the government dragging us into a bitter trade war in order to ensure "fair play" for the Standard Oil Company—to be dissolved a few weeks ago—in India or Beluchistan or Se-ringapatam?

The congressional editor of Collier's Weekly says that the weight of sentiment in the House "is obviously opposed to the merchant-marine subsidy," and explains this as follows: "For this state of mind, the promoters of that measure can find as many reasons as elsewhere in the tactics of the three periodicals which, apparently, have been subsidized to conduct the fight." As a fair exhibit, the writer quotes from a "vulgar attack" on Congressman Kustermann in "The American Flag." Collier's estimates of the effect of the cheap advice with which the so-called Merchant Marine League of Cleveland is showering all who oppose the subsidy scheme accords exactly with what was said in these columns two or three weeks ago. A copy of "The American Flag" is now before us. In this issue Congressman Steenerson, of Minnesota, is made the special object of the league's malignancy. Turning the pages, we read: "If he did attend the meetings and makes the foregoing statement, he has deliberately and maliciously lied." "Mr. Steenerson is again guilty of deliberate and malicious falsification when he says," etc. We believe we can assure Mr. Steenerson that his standing is not in the least injured by this abuse, since probably venomous and vindictive language usually reacts on those who use it. By and by it may be recognized as a very unwelcome distinction to have the approval of the Merchant Marine League's mouthpieces.

The action of the penitentiary board

in electing one of its own members to the important and profitable post of superintendent seems likely to bring forth a more complete rebuke than we had anticipated. That it would draw from the present Assembly a law forbidding such a thing for the future was certainly expected. But now, in addition to this, a bill has been introduced prohibiting the appointment to any State institutional board of more than two members from any one city.

The penitentiary board, it will be remembered, is made up entirely of Richmond men, and, of course, this measure is aimed at it. The advantage of having only Richmond men on this board lies in the fact that, since the penitentiary is here, meetings are thus made more convenient and the management of the institution more easy. But it is open to objections on other grounds, and the recent election of a superintendent did more to emphasize the objections than the advantages.

A kind smile from a lady is all very well, but we do consider that \$28,000 is quite a stiff price.

The corporation tax collections will begin March 1. It behoves concerns who mean to unincorporate themselves to move with some celerity.

Deeding children to Senator Tillman is not a thing that would have occurred to many people in this world.

The householders of Richmond, also, pass a few urgent deficiency bills from time to time.

A little boycott is a hungry-toothed thing.

HIGH PRAISE FOR HEMPHILL.

IS Numbered Among "Grand Old Men" of Journalism.

The removal of Major John Hemphill, for twenty-three years editor of the Charleston News and Courier, to Richmond, Va., where he will henceforth direct the editorial effort of The Times-Dispatch, is the latest newspaper sensation of the moment.

Major Hemphill is one of the grand old men of American journalism. He is as positive a personality as Colonel Henry Watterson, and hardly less picturesque. It is almost as difficult to separate him in thought from the Charleston News and Courier as to conceive of color without light, violets without perfume, June-time without roses. He seemed as much a part of Charleston as old St. Michael's or the Battery. The outside world at large imagined that the major—sometimes known affectionately as the deacon—might, in the fullness of time, end in a glorious reward in a land that is fairer than day; and that he would then embark from the port of Charleston never doubted for it was he who taught us to believe that the distance from that point to paradise is a mere trifle.

But, as beautiful, attractive, and truly alluring as Charleston is, it has nothing on Richmond with respect to those things. Having fitted like a glove the journalistic necessities of the South Carolina city for many years, Major Hemphill was automatically drawn himself to the Richmond groove sans the least friction or rattling of that city's outward cage, whatever. He carries to the Times-Dispatch his wonderful and compelling talents in all their polished maturity and at their best.

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